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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 556 - MAY 3, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY

OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. EGYPT. SADAT BROKE LITTLE NEW GROUND IN PRESSING INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN HIS TWO-HOUR MAY DAY SPEECH YESTERDAY. (MAY DAY WAS CELEBRATED IN EGYPT ON MAY 2 BECAUSE MAY 1 WAS SHAM EL-NESSIM, A FESTIVAL OF SPRING THAT DATES BACK TO PHARAONIC TIMES.) HIS SPEECH CONTAINED LITTLE THAT WILL BUY HIM A RESPITE FROM DOMESTIC CRITICISM OR SLOW THE DEEPENING CONVICTION AMONG EGYPTIANS THAT HIS PEACE INITIATIVE HAS FAILED. SADAT SHOWED LITTLE EAGERNESS FOR CONFRONTATION. HE WAS GENERALLY RESTRAINED IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC CRITICS; HE WAS CAUSTIC TOWARD ARAB OPPONENTS OF HIS PEACE POLICY BUT LEFT THE DOOR OPEN TO RECONCILIATION.

2. SADAT PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER FOR HIS STRAIGHT-FORWARDNESS. CLEARLY ACCEPTING ASSURANCES THAT THE US POSITION ON A PEACE SETTLEMENT HAD NOT CHANGED, SADAT ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS DOING ITS VERY BEST
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TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. SADAT ASSERTED THAT HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PEACE PROCESS. HE JUSTIFIED HIS OPTIMISM BY SAYING THAT HE COULD NOT REVEAL EVERYTHING THAT IS TAKING PLACE AS A RESULT OF THE ATHERTON MISSION AND CARTER'S "PRINCIPLED STAND."

3. ON ISRAEL, SADAT SAID THAT IT STILL DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM. ISRAEL WAS TRYING TO SEE WHETHER IT COULD REDUCE THE EFFECT OF EGYPT'S PEACE MOVES, BUT THE WHOLE WORLD-INCLUDING THOUSANDS OF ISRAELIS--NOW SUPPORTED EGYPT. HE AGAIN ASSERTED THAT THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR WAS THE LAST ONE.

4. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY CAIRO, SADAT HEATEDLY REITERATED EGYPT'S COMMITMENT TO ARAB SOLIDARITY. HE MERCILESSLY ATTACKED HIS ARAB DETRACTORS AS "POLITICAL TEENAGERS," AND TOOK A NEW TACK BY ACCUSING THEM (BY IMPLICATION, IRAQ, LIBYA, AND ALGERIA) OF REFUSING TO APPLY THE OIL EMBARGO IN 1973 IN ORDER TO PUT MORE MONEY IN THE BANK.

5. APPEALING TO EGYPTIAN NATIONALISM, SADAT ASSERTED THAT "OTHERS HAVE MADE ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF MONEY OUT OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE." NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN TO RECONCILIATION WITH THE FIVE STATES IN THE "REFUSAL FRONT."

6. SYRIA, THE ONLY ONE TO RESPOND SO FAR, DID NOT ACCEPT THE OFFER. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED RADIO BLASTED SADAT'S SPEECH AND CALLED FOR HIS OVERTHROW. THE RADIO ALSO ATTACKED US POLICY. IT DECLARED, "WE WERE NOT SURPRISED AT THE LATEST AMERICAN ATTITUDE (PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUNDAY TIMES INTERVIEW). CARTER GAVE BEGIN GREAT SATISFACTION WHEN HE DECLARED THAT HE REJECTED THE SECRET

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ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. . . . WE HAVE STATED REPEATEDLY THAT THE US IS HOSTILE TO THE ARAB CAUSE AND SERVES THE ZIONIST ENEMY."

7. THE MAIN THRUST OF SADAT'S SPEECH WAS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, HOWEVER. WHILE HE OFFERED LITTLE TO SILENCE THE GROWING NUMBER OF CRITICS, HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS AWARE OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT POPULAR GRIEVANCES. HE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AND NOT ISOLATED, THEREBY REVEALING HIS AWARENESS OF THIS COMMON ALLEGATION.

8. SADAT'S MAIN REMEDY FOR EGYPT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS WERE AN ORDER TO PRIME MINISTER SALEM TO CARRY OUT AN "IMMEDIATE" CABINET RESHUFFLE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS GREETED WITH LOUD AND ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE BY HIS AUDIENCE OF 20,000. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT GAMASY AND KAMIL WILL REMAIN IN PLACE. INSTEAD, THE CHANGES ARE LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THOSE MINISTRIES HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. AS A POSTSCRIPT, SADAT ANNOUNCED A BONUS OF 10 DAYS' WAGES.

9. IMPLICIT IN SADAT'S SPEECH WAS A THEME PREVIOUSLY STRESSED BY COMMENTATOR ANIS MANSOUR IN HIS MUCH-DISCUSSED COMMENTARY IN THE APRIL 30 ISSUE OF OCTOBER MAGAZINE: DECISIVE ACTION BY THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE WOULD BE NEEDED TO PREVENT CAIRO FROM BURNING A THIRD TIME. MANSOUR WARNED THAT THE EGYPTIANS MUST SAVE THEMSELVES FROM MISGUIDED DEMOCRACY. SADAT, FOR HIS PART, INTIMATED THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS WERE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IN ORDER TO HARM EGYPT. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

10. ISRAEL. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTED THAT THE ISRAELI PRESS IS PAYING LESS HEED TO THE ATMOSPHERICS OF BEGIN'S SECRET

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US VISIT THAN TO THE SUBSTANCE OF CURRENT US-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND THE STATUS OF THE PEACE PROCESS. WHILE OBSERVERS WERE PLEASED WITH THE WARM WELCOME EXTENDED TO BEGIN, COLUMNISTS AGREED THAT THIS REFLECTED A WHITE HOUSE FENCE-MENDING EFFORT WITH AMERICAN JEWS. SEVERAL COMMENTARIES REFERRED TO PERSISTING US-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES, AND CITED THE BREVITY OF CARTER-BEGIN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS AS PROOF THAT NO BREAKTHROUGH HAD OCCURRED. EDITORIALS IN HAARETZ AND THE JERUSALEM POST STRESSED THE NEED FOR ISRAEL TO PRESENT NEW IDEAS FOR THE WEST BANK AND OF ISRAEL'S WILLINGNESS TO CONCLUDE PEACE WITH EGYPT. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

11. LEBANON. RELATIONS BETWEEN UNIFIL FORCES AND THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON ARE BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT. THE FRENCH CONTINGENT, PARTICULARLY, IS FACING MANY PROBLEMS. YESTERDAY, FOR THE SECOND DAY IN A ROW FRENCH TROOPS CLASHED WITH PALESTINIANS. IN TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS AT LEAST THREE FRENCH SOLDIERS WERE KILLED AND SEVEN WOUNDED, WHILE PALESTINIAN CASUALTIES OF ONE DEAD AND TWO WOUNDED WERE REPORTED. COMMANDER OF THE FRENCH FORCES, COL. SALVAN, WAS AMONG THE WOUNDED. IN ADDITION TO AMBUSHING FRENCH UNIFIL VEHICLES, PALESTINIANS ATTACKED THE FRENCH BARRACKS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TYRE WITH MORTARS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

12. THE BASIC PROBLEM STEMS FROM THE FRENCH REFUSAL TO ALLOW PALESTINIANS BACK INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. A PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN IN BEIRUT CRITICIZED WALDHEIM FOR SAYING THAT THE PREVENTION OF PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION WAS PART OF THE UNIFIL MANDATE.

13. IN OTHER ACTION YESTERDAY, PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS AND SYRIAN PEACEKEEPING TROOPS FOUGHT EACH OTHER WITH ROCKETS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS IN SIDON. PALESTINIANS SAID THE FIGHTING BROKE OUT AFTER THE SYRIANS TRIED TO

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ARREST A GUERRILLA BELONGING TO THE IRAQI-BACKED ALF. (CONFIDENTIAL)

14. YEMEN. PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI'S ATTEMPTS TO STRENGTHEN HIS POLITICAL POSITION HAVE LED TO A SHIFT TO THE RIGHT IN YEMENI POLITICS. ALTHOUGH MANY LEADING YEMENI MODERNIZERS FEAR THAT THIS SHIFT MAY UNDERMINE POLITICAL

STABILITY, THE SAUDIS CANNOT HELP BUT BE PLEASED AT AL-GHASHMI'S MOVES AND THE APPARENT SWING TO THE RIGHT. ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE SUPPORTED HIM SINCE HE SUCCEEDED AN ASSASSINATED FELLOW OFFICER LAST OCTOBER, THEY HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE INSECURITY OF HIS REGIME.

15. A BY-PRODUCT OF THESE MOVES, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN AN UPSURGE OF ACTIVITY BY REACTIONARY MUSLIM ELEMENTS. THEY HAVE RECENTLY BLOCKED EDUCATIONAL REFORM MEASURES AND ARE OPPOSING JUDICIAL REFORM AS RUNNING COUNTER TO ISLAMIC LAW. ALTHOUGH AL-GHASHMI IS TAKING PAINS TO AVOID ALIENATING THE VARIOUS AND USUALLY CONFLICTING SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY, SOME OF THE MODERNIZERS ARE CONCERNED THAT THE RIGHT-WING RESURGENCE WILL UNDERMINE POLITICAL STABILITY BY REOPENING TRADITIONAL YEMENI RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL CLEAVAGES. (SECRET) VANCE

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